

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM SOUTH COUNTY OUTREACH

SUMMER 2026

**Thank you
for continuing
to stand with us and
making an impact.**

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Bridges Generations**

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**On the Other Side
of a Crisis**



**south county
outreach**

Prevention Rooted in Dignity and Respect

At South County Outreach's Food Market, clients can find more than just food. Once a month, they can access nourishing ingredients and staples like milk, eggs, butter, protein, and fresh produce. But most importantly, they're in control of their cart and what goes in it.

To better support neighbors, South County Outreach has announced an exciting move. Our pantry re-opened on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 23661 Birtcher Drive in Lake Forest. This new 5,000-square-foot space is just around the corner from our Irvine location, which now houses our main office and warehouse operations.

The Lake Forest Food Market also rolled out a new appointment system to reduce wait times. This will also allow the South County Outreach team to serve clients with more dignity, care, and attention.

Appointments are easy to schedule and can be made through the South County Outreach website. The pantry continues to be open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Like the Irvine pantry, the Lake Forest location will serve clients with South County Outreach's values of respect and dignity. It will provide an experience not unlike their local grocery store, where clients can "shop" for items that accommodate their family's tastes, dietary restrictions, and nutritional needs.

The new location will also allow South County Outreach to better meet the community's growing demand as food insecurity continues to rise in Orange County.



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A Letter from LaVal

Dear Friends,

As we welcome you to this edition of our newsletter, I'm reminded that South County Outreach exists for moments when hardworking families need a bridge—not a handout. For more than 35 years, we have helped Orange County neighbors navigate temporary setbacks before they become lasting crises. Last year alone, more than 9,000 individuals received support through fresh food access, housing assistance, and community resources designed to keep families stable and moving forward. When SNAP benefits were recently delayed across California, families served by SCO continued putting food on the table because this community had built a safety net around them. That is the power of prevention, and it only happens because of supporters like you.

With gratitude,

LaVal Brewer
President & CEO
South County Outreach

Creating Hope Through Service

Volunteering at South County Outreach is more than service hours for Roberto and Cage. It's a family legacy of compassion. Over the past two years, the father-and-son duo has dedicated several days each week to helping local families through the food pantry, grocery rescue program, and school pop-up pantries.

Roberto learned the importance of giving back as a child in New York, where he watched his father quietly help families who couldn't afford groceries at the family meat market. Years later, he passed those same values on to his children through family volunteer trips. In Peru and the Dominican Republic, they donate school supplies, clothing, and sports equipment to children in need.

Today, those lessons continue at South County Outreach.

Cage says volunteering has transformed him personally. It's helping him grow more confident while learning how to connect with people from all backgrounds. Roberto has also been inspired by the resilience of the families they serve and the generosity of the community that makes the work possible.

"People don't always realize how many families are struggling right here in our community," he shared. "But when someone leaves with food and a smile, you know it matters."

One of Roberto's favorite moments is handing out fresh produce and hearing clients share stories, recipes, and pieces of their culture. "Sometimes that conversation means just as much as the food," he said.

When asked what donor support truly provides, Cage answered simply: "Hope and security for people."



Words of Thanks - from those we serve



“The food quality was only exceeded by the warm friendly customer service.”



“This was my first time here and I couldn't be more thankful for what I received for me and my kids. Everyone was so helpful and friendly. Thank you so much.”



“The experience is great. Just like going to the grocery store. I appreciate you all so much.”

Setting the Table for Change



On April 17, over 240 guests gathered at Tanaka Farms for our newly reimagined Beyond the Bowl. It was an evening that intentionally broke from the traditional gala format. There was no silent auction, no paddle raise—just an experience designed to build community and keep the focus on South County Outreach's mission.

The event kicked off in the fields, where guests picked fresh fruit before heading to a hillside celebration. Throughout the evening, they enjoyed live music from Tijuana Dogs and by Clif Miller, local food trucks, and a new strawberry margarita by Mission Craft Cocktails.

The impact of the evening goes beyond the experience itself. Beyond the Bowl is an opportunity for families, supporters, and partners to help fuel year-round support to prevent hunger and homelessness across Orange County.

Learn more about this year's event at www.sco-oc.org/beyond-the-bowl.



Did you know that . . .

\$125

fills the fridge a week for a senior



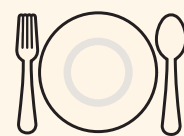
\$250

fills the fridge a few weeks in the summer



\$375

covers a senior's summer food gap



A Bright Future: Tarene's Journey from Uncertainty to Stability

Last year, we met Tarene as she was leaving military life behind and stepping into the unknown. An 11-year Navy veteran, she faced a difficult transition to civilian life with no safe place to land.

Because of supporters like YOU at a time she needed it most, South County Outreach was able to help her find housing that provided solitude and stability as she planned her next steps. Uplifted by our support and encouragement, Tarene was able to achieve a milestone she once thought was out of reach: moving into her very own apartment.

Today, she's reached the other side of a crisis. She's finishing her degree in psychology, pursuing a career in human resources, and even helping her niece go back to school. "This whole process has been a blessing," she said. "Thank you for everything."

South County Outreach changes lives—this is what your support makes possible. Thanks to donors and supporters, veterans like Tarene can find hope, stability, and a fresh start.



... Prevention Rooted in Dignity and Respect

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With the new pantry location comes a renewed commitment to serving the community. Our aim is to prevent a short-term emergency from becoming a long-term crisis. Right now, one out of every nine individuals in Orange County is experiencing food insecurity. The new CalFresh eligibility rules will only make things more challenging. It's anticipated that around 40,000 to 50,000 residents will no longer have access to federal assistance after the rules went into effect June 1.

There are several ways to help ensure that none of our neighbors in Orange County goes to bed hungry. Non-perishable food items can be dropped off at our Irvine office on 7 Whatney, Ste. B, Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, or donations for perishable food items can be made at www.sco-oc.org/donate. You can also learn more about hosting a food drive or volunteering by contacting the food team at 949-380-8144 ext. 203.

HOPE365

Did you know each month thousands of our neighbors rely on us to provide the food and other housing essentials to survive? Won't you help them and us today by joining our monthly recurring program called **HOPE365**! This is a group of special friends who commit to a monthly recurring gift of just \$10, \$15, \$20, \$25 or more! Any amount will help feed hungry people each day, week and month!

Become a member today of the **HOPE365** monthly giving community to help feed hungry men, women, children and our aging neighbors in need who might otherwise go hungry!

Thank you for your compassionate consideration and visit bit.ly/JoinHope365 to join today!